

HOW DO/CAN PEOPLE LIVE TOGETHER IN A SUCCESSFUL INTER-GENERATIONAL LIVING SITUATION?

<http://newoldage.blogs.nytimes.com/2008/12/08/tips-for-multigenerational-households/>

- “real” experts—the families actually living this life successfully
- Two women integrated their mothers into their households at a time when their children were small, allowing Grandma to provide backup child care and an extra pair of hands in a busy household
- Takes already good relationships from everyone: uncommonly free of the baggage of childhood and adolescence, built on mutual respect, adult-to-adult; husbands who are totally on board with the living arrangement and themselves close and comfortable with their mothers-in-law; wisdom to carefully plan in advance for how they would all live together and then adjust as circumstances changed

Mullins

- considered condos in the same building, duplexes, eventually bought and remodeled a private home with clearly defined living quarters
- Questions asked along the way:
 - What about the squeaky bed?
 - What about toddler tantrums?
 - What about money?
 - Two years of sharing one super soundproof wall, the big back room, and the yard—life seems to be working for everyone
- Advice from Mullins:
 - If possible, let idea sit through many conversations; you're remaking your family, don't rush it
 - Figure out what is family time, personal time, and big extended family time; ex., some nights are big family dinners, some are just immediate family
 - Divide up household responsibilities
 - Divide up utility bills and rotate; ex., separate electricity meters but one pays for water the other for garbage and then switch monthly or annually
 - Think about how much and what kind of space you'll need; ex., they share a 1800 SF house but there are places they can go to be alone (i.e. a bedroom or a coffee shop)
 - Devise a system to deal with household questions and problems; ex., monthly meetings—or more often, if need—about issues big and small (family pet or leaving toys in the driveway)
 - Be flexible; plan for living arrangement might need to change after the first month or two as you adjust and figure things out and then again after a few years as people get older

Smith and Rymarowicz

- “mother has always been a supportive, upbeat, nonjudgmental and respectful parent and friend with a lively sense of humor...open-minded, adaptable, unconventional, patient and willing to admit mistakes, a model of positivity”
- Advice:
 - Use trial and error; tweak, refine, and fine-tune the rules boundaries to maintain harmony
 - Pay careful attention to one another’s needs, moods, strengths, and weaknesses and act quickly, forthrightly, and decisively to ensure that things continue to run smoothly
 - Be rational and averse to conflict; speak up for yourselves, support and listen to one another, and readjust behavior and attitude for the greater good
 - Define functions clearly; ex., at first, mother’s function was “helping to raise the kids” but now that kids are grown, she contributes by keeping the house functioning smoothly by doing dishes, laundry, and other household chores as she’s able, seeing it as her job and as giving her life meaning within the family
 - Avoid power struggles, no matter how big or small; ex., compromising on the best way to make mashed potatoes
 - Respect privacy; personal space should be respected
 - Encourage independence as long as possible
 - Socialize, both together and throughout the day and with friends outside the house
- I-G living isn’t for everyone; families with less-than-ideal relationships or parents with already compromised health might have a harder time
- Two separate kitchens so that each woman could run it her own way without interference
- “It requires a lot of give and take: which it seems like people now simply do not want to be bothered with.”

<http://50andbeyond.com/senior-services/7-tips-on-intergenerational-living/>

- Take a family partnership perspective; everyone needs to be informed and to give input into household arrangements
- Set expectations right away; avoid conflict by working to ensure upfront that family members see eye-to-eye about each person's roles and responsibilities
- Ask for help: engage children in responsibilities around the home and make it clear to adult siblings that you want them to be involved; if extended family will not help with respite care, arrange for a professional caregiver service
- Make family unity key; strive for routines, rituals, and traditions that bring the family together including family movie night or a walk
- Find threads of common interest; build on those to develop family activities that are conducive to building deeper relationships, like cooking, family history, health or wellness
- Keep lines of communication open; recognize importance of private time and family time for every member of the household
- Distinguish between private space and shared space; shared space should be stocked with material inviting for all ages and items that could stimulate discussion, such as a child's project or "brag book" of photos; make clear rules regarding the private spaces set aside for each member of the household

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

ISSUES:

- How are the needs of one household different than others? How are they the same?
- What kind of internal relationships will each unit have?
- What kind of relationships will each unit have with each other?
- Where is the common ground and where is the friction?
- What kind of daily routine will each unit go through? Who will interact with whom?
- And most importantly, how can the architecture affect these relationships and interactions?